

Thomas Jefferson to George Washington, December 19, 1791, Report on Lake Erie Lands, from the Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

OPINION RELATIVE TO CERTAIN LANDS ON LAKE ERIE, SOLD BY THE UNITED STATES TO PENNSYLVANIA

December 19, 1791.

The Secretary of State, to whom was referred, by the President of the United States, a letter from the Governor of Pennsylvania, with the documents therein mentioned, on the subject of certain lands on Lake Erie, having had the same under consideration, thereupon Reports:

That Congress, by their resolution of June 6th, 1788, directed the Geographer General of the United States to ascertain the quantity of land belonging to the United States between Pennsylvania and Lake Erie, and authorized a sale thereof.

That a sale was accordingly made to the commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

That Congress, by their resolution of September 4th, 1788, relinquished to the said commonwealth all their right to the government and jurisdiction of the said tract of land; but the right of soil was not transferred by the resolution.

That a survey of the said tract has been since made, and the amount of the purchase money been settled between the comptrollers of the United States and of the said Commonwealth, and that the Governor of Pennsylvania declares in the said letter, to the

Library of Congress

President of the United States, that he is ready to close the transaction on behalf of the said commonwealth.

That there is no person at present authorized, by law, to convey to the said commonwealth the right of soil, in the said tract of land.

And the Secretary of State is therefore of opinion that the said letter and documents should be laid before the legislature of the United States to make such provision by law for conveying the said right of soil, as they in their wisdom shall think fit.